

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE NON-COGNITIVE SKILLS



A Guide for Youth Developers and Educators



About this guide

This Guide profiles sixteen options for youth development organizations and schools to promote non-cognitive skills among those they serve. It is designed to help youth developers and educators make comparisons between multiple strategies that exist to foster non-cognitive skills in children and youth. Each strategy is assessed on eight key characteristics: cost, evidence, population, training, duration, frequency, depth, and assessments.

This Guide is adapted from research conducted for the Silicon Valley Out-of-School Time Collaborative, and is therefore rooted in the out-of-school time/expanded learning context. It is our ardent hope that this Guide will be useful to anyone working with youth, regardless of the setting.

The strategies featured in this Guide were identified through a review of recent research on non-cognitive skills, a scan of other guides for youth developers and educators and expert recommendation. For more information about the review process, please contact Public Profit at info@publicprofit.net.

Acknowledgements

The Silicon Valley Out-of-School Time Collaborative supports nine local organizations to develop and strengthen academic pathways beyond the standard school day for middle and high school students, with the goal to empower youth from low-income families to succeed in school and attend college.

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Non-cognitive Skills and Out of School Time

Recent research suggests that non-cognitive skills¹ - the strategies, attitudes, and behaviors youth use inside and outside of the classroom – are critical to young people’s success in school and the workplace. Commonly cited examples of non-cognitive skills include tenacity, optimism, self-regulation, and metacognition.

Many of these skills are a natural fit for out of school time settings, including after-school and summer programs. They can be cultivated in young people through multiple means, and are not dependent on specific academic content knowledge among staff, as is the case with more traditional academic skill development activities. Moreover, available evidence suggests that non-cognitive skill development is deeply dependent on a positive learning environment, which closely mirrors positive youth development principles.

The research on non-cognitive factors is just emerging. The current literature therefore has the “Jingle/Jangle” problem, that is, the inconsistent terminology used to refer to non-cognitive factors. For the sake of clarity, we adopt the terminology presented in a recent report from the University of Chicago in our discussion of non-cognitive factors.²

The Five Non-Cognitive Skills

In their review of the existing research, the University of Chicago scholars identify five non-cognitive skills that contribute to students’ academic success. They are:

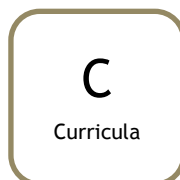
- **Academic Behaviors** – observable behaviors that show students’ engagement and effort
- **Academic Mindsets** - students’ attitudes and beliefs about their academic work and ability
- **Academic Perseverance** – the ability to overcome distractions, obstacles and challenges to complete academic work
- **Learning Strategies** – tactics that students use to help them remember, think and learn
- **Social Skills** – behaviors that allow students to interact with peers and adults in positive and productive ways

¹ We will use both “non-cognitive skills” and “non-cognitive factors” interchangeably in this report.

² Farrington, C.A., Roderick, M., Allensworth, E., Nagaoka, J., Keyes, T.S., Johnson, D.W., & Beechum, N.O. (2012). *Teaching adolescents to become learners. The role of noncognitive factors in shaping school performance: A critical literature review*. Chicago: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.

Strategies to Promote Non-Cognitive Skills

The sixteen strategies to promote non-cognitive factors that are included in this guide address at least one non-cognitive factor, can be implemented in or out-of-school, and provide sufficient detail to describe the eight key characteristics. Strategies are grouped into three types: Curricula, Self-Guided Activities or Approaches. A brief description of each type is below.



Curricula – a set of activities for children and youth that require the facilitation of an educator (including teachers and youth development workers).



Self-Guided Activity – a set of activities that can be completed individually by children and youth. The activities may be complemented with support from an educator (including teachers and youth development workers) but the presence of an adult is not necessary.



Approach – a set of practices that educators (including teachers and youth development workers) use with children and youth that structure the environment to provide multiple opportunities for youth to practice different skills.

Feasibility Tiers







Strategies are presented in Tiers based on the strength of the evidence base, use with diverse populations, and applicability to multiple age groups.

- » **Tier 1** Tier 1 strategies can be used with all school-age youth and/or diverse populations. Strong evidence of their effectiveness is available.
- » **Tier 2** Tier 2 strategies are suitable for some, but not all, school-age youth and may not have been used with diverse youth populations. Moderate or strong evidence of effectiveness is available for these strategies.
- » **Tier 3** Tier 3 strategies serve youth from one age group and may not have been used with diverse youth populations. Moderate or minimal evidence of effectiveness is available for these strategies.

Key Characteristics: Definitions and Legend






KEY CHARACTERISTIC	LEGEND
Cost <i>The financial investment that is required to implement the strategies. The price will be listed to indicate the overall cost of the strategy. This includes noting if the cost is per student, per educator, or per license. Additional icons are used to clarify what is included in the cost and to show if the strategy requires ongoing fees.</i>	<p>One time purchase will be listed as applicable</p> <p>∞ Reoccurring cost</p> <p>C Curriculum</p> <p>T Training</p> <p>⌚ Time sensitive (ability to use can expire)</p> <p>◆ Consumable materials (e.g. workbooks and other single-use items)</p>
Evidence <i>The extent to which there is research to support claims of effectiveness.</i>	<p>✓ Expert or practitioner endorsed</p> <p>✓✓ External evaluations conducted</p> <p>✓✓✓ Quasi-experimental or experimental research conducted</p>
Population <i>The age range for which the intervention is appropriate and whether the strategy has been implemented with ethnic and linguistic minorities and/or youth with specific learning considerations (e.g. English Language Learners, learning disabilities, gifted programs).</i>	<p>K-12 Grade level will be listed</p> <p>■ Not implemented with ethnic and/or linguistic minorities or youth with specific learning considerations</p> <p>✚ Implemented with ethnic and/or linguistic minorities</p> <p>✦ Implemented with youth who have specific learning considerations</p>
Training <i>The types of professional development supports available to support implementation. If applicable, the duration of the training will be noted.</i>	<p>No training available will be listed as applicable</p> <p>💻 Online or video</p> <p>👤 Live in-person training</p> <p>📖 Guidebook/Manual</p>
Duration <i>The recommended time to implement the strategy.</i>	<p>The duration will be listed in hours, months, or years as appropriate.</p>
Frequency <i>This is the recommended frequency that the strategy should be used with youth to be effective.</i>	<p>The frequency will be listed in hours or days as appropriate.</p>
Depth <i>The extent to which there are multiple options for implementation. For example, there may be an online version and an in-person option for some curricula.</i>	<p>Each option will be listed if applicable.</p>
Assessments <i>An indication of the availability of assessments to measure the effectiveness of the strategy.</i>	<p>Available - assessments are included in the intervention materials</p> <p>Available from another provider - assessments are not included in the intervention materials but alternate assessments have been used to assess the effectiveness of the strategy</p>

Tier 1 Strategies: Applicable to All School-Age Youth & Strong Evidence Base

TYPE	Curricula	Self-Guided Activities	Approaches		
STRATEGY	Student Success Skills - a five part series curriculum that focuses on cognitive, social, emotional, and self management skills (page 36)	Mindset Works Brainology®* - is an online curriculum that teaches youth to have a growth mindset. In-person lessons complement the online curriculum (page 37)	Youth Program Quality Intervention - A 3 step quality intervention processes based on the Youth Program Quality Assessment (page 38)	Mindful Schools*- an educator training program designed to promote the use of mindfulness in the learning environment (page 39)	Tribes Learning Communities - a four strategy, collaborative approach to creating a caring and supportive environment (page 40)
NON-COGNITIVE FACTORS	<i>Learning Strategies Social Navigation</i>	<i>Academic Mindsets</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Social Navigation</i>	<i>All</i>
EVIDENCE	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
ASSESSMENTS	Available from another provider	Available	Available	Available	Available
TRAINING					
COST	\$55 per curriculum One time fee C	\$10/youth, \$60/educator, \$1,500/ site  C, T,	\$3,028/site T	\$575/educator C, T	\$225/educator C, T
POPULATION	K – 12 th ❖	K – 12 th	K - 12 th +	K – 12 th + ❖	K – 12 th + ❖
DURATION	8 weeks	20 hours	18 months	6 weeks	Daily
FREQUENCY	1 time/week	Flexible	30 hours/week	2 hours/week	N/A
DEPTH	In-person	Online, In-person	In-person	In-person, Online	In-person






*This strategy has features that overlap with another type (i.e., curricula, instrument, approach). These features are described in the detailed summary.

Tier 2 Strategies: Applicable to Some School-Age Youth & Moderate to Strong Evidence Base

TYPE	Curricula			Approaches	
	4Rs (Reading, Writing, Respect, and Resolution) - a grade sequenced curriculum that uses read-alouds, book talks and interactive skill lessons (page 41)	Social Decision Making/Problem Solving Program Social Decision Making/Problem Solving Program - A 30 lesson curricula that focuses on teaching self-control, social awareness and decision-making skills (page 42)	PATHS Curriculum- a grade specific curriculum that focuses on 5 areas of social development (page 43)	Design Thinking - a 5 phase approach to problem solving that is designed to share control between educator and young learners (page 44)	RULER Approach - a 3-phase approach to improving emotional intelligence that includes intensive training for educators and a skill based curriculum for youth (page 45)
NON-COGNITIVE FACTORS	<i>Social Navigation</i>	<i>Social Navigation</i>	<i>Social Navigation</i>	<i>Learning Strategies</i>	<i>Social Navigation</i>
EVIDENCE	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
ASSESSMENTS	Available	Available	Available	Not available	Available
TRAINING					 
COST	\$150/youth	\$40 One time fee C	\$399 - \$799 One time fee C, ♦	Free	\$3,300/educator C, T
POPULATION	K – 8 th +	K – 8 th	K – 6 th ♦ ■	K – 12 th	K – 8 th ♦
DURATION	35 weeks	1 academic year	30 minutes	12 hours	2 academic years
FREQUENCY	1 time /week	Variable	2-3 times/week	2 times/week	Varies
DEPTH	In-person	In-person	In-person	In-person	In-person

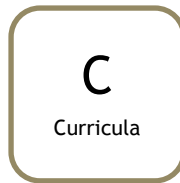
*This strategy has features that overlap with another type (i.e., curricula, instrument, approach). These features are described in the detailed summary.

Tier 3 Strategies: Applicable to Some School-Age Youth & Minimal to Moderate Evidence

TYPE	Curricula			Self-Guided Activities	Approaches	
STRATEGY	Mindfulness in Afterschool - a 16 session curriculum that teaches youth to practice mindfulness (page 46)	SOAR Study Skills - a series of 10 - 20 minute lessons that teach youth specific study skills using a four-step model (page 47)	Step-it-up-2-Thrive - a 4-part curriculum that supports youths' efforts to achieve their personal development goals (page 47)	Self Authoring - a series of 4 structured writing exercises to improve goal setting (page 48)	Building Intentional Communities Initiative* - uses a combination of curriculum and staff training to establish community values and improve youths' social and emotional development (page 49)	G.R.I.T. Initiative - uses a rubric and a curriculum to promote youth behaviors that are examples of Guts, Resilience, Integrity, and Tenacity (page 50)
NON-COGNITIVE FACTORS	<i>Social Navigation</i>	<i>Learning Strategies</i>	<i>Academic Mindsets Learning Strategies</i>	<i>Learning Strategies</i>	<i>Social Navigation</i>	<i>Academic Mindsets</i>
EVIDENCE	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓
ASSESSMENTS	Available	Available	Available	Not available	Available from another provider	Available
TRAINING		 		Not available		Not available
COST	\$6,864 One time fee C, T	\$500 One time fee C, T	Free C, T	\$30 One time fee C	\$5,000 One time fee C, T	Minimal
POPULATION	K – 6 th	K - 12 th ❖	5 th - 12 th +	12 th	K - 6 th +	9 th - 12 th +
DURATION	20-25 minutes	10-20 minutes	50 minutes	2.5 hours	1 academic year	4-6 weeks
FREQUENCY	1-2 times/week	Flexible	Flexible	Once	2-3 times/week	5 times/week
DEPTH	In-person	In-person	In-person	Online	2 levels of intensity	In-person

*This strategy has features that overlap with another type (i.e., curricula, instrument, approach). These features are described in the detailed summary.

Tier 1 Strategies for Addressing Non-Cognitive Factors



Student Success Skills (SSS)

The Student Success Skills curriculum is organized into 5 skill areas: 1) Goal setting and progress monitoring 2) Creating a supportive environment 3) Cognitive and memory skills 4) Performing under pressure and; 5) Building healthy optimism. The SSS curriculum includes 5 lessons (one on each topic) that follow a 3-part model. In the first part of the lesson youth review goals and monitor their progress on previously set goals. In the middle part of the lesson youth learn and practice new skills. The lesson closes with youth sharing successes and setting new goals. The five lessons should take place once a week. If needed, booster lessons can also be delivered once a month.

An alternate implementation model is a small group format for youth who may need additional support. This option includes 8 forty-five minute lessons and 4 monthly booster lessons. Other options included a Spanish version of the curriculum and a SSS curriculum guide for parents.

In research studies the curriculum has been implemented by school counselors, however, it can be implemented by other educators. The SSS curriculum was designed to be used without the need for training but the developers will provide training if requested. The trainings are full-day or half day sessions that can accommodate up to 60 people. A training session costs \$3,000.

Four quasi-experimental studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of the SSS curriculum. Across the four studies participating youth increased their standardized test scores (math and reading) and reduced rates of teacher reported problem behaviors.

Website: www.studentsuccessskills.com

SGSelf-Guided
Activity

Mindset Works Brainology

This is an online curriculum that teaches youth to have a growth mindset. The online curriculum consists of 4 instructional units that take 2.5 hours to complete. Online instruction is complemented by up to 10 hours of in-person activities. Educators should plan for 7 – 12 hours of in-person activities over 5 – 16 weeks. A sample implementation guide is available on the Brainology website. The program can be used with all grade levels but the developers have seen particular success for students in 5th – 9th grade.

The Brainology program includes student licenses for the online curriculum and an educator kit that includes a guidebook, enrichment materials, and additional support resources such as planning tools and assessments. The cost of the student licenses depend on the quantity purchased but can be as low as \$10 per student. Each license is valid for 6 months after it is first used. To use Brainology, youth will need internet access and a computer that has Adobe Flash plug-in version 8 or higher and/or Adobe Reader plug-in for Mac.

Mindset works offers online training for educators that consists of 5 fifteen minute video modules about growth mindset and how it can be put into practice. Educators will also have access to the Growth Mindset Online Community where they can learn from and collaborate with other educators who use Brainology.

Several studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of Brainology. Randomized control studies find an increase in students' GPA, improved standardized reading test scores, and a stronger focus on effort. Research on the Brainology School Kit, which provides training for all educators at the school site, demonstrated that students developed a growth mindset in multiple subject areas (math, science, humanities, and English).

Website:

www.mindsetworks.com

Supporting Research:

www.mindsetworks.com/websitemedia/info/impactsummaryhandout.pdf

Sample Implementation Guide:

www.mindsetworks.com/websitemedia/protected/implm/Brainology_Implementation_Guide-Part_II-GET_SET_4kdo1.pdf



Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI)

The YPQI is a collaborative intervention structured around the use of the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA). The YPQA is a research-based validated observation tool developed by the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. The tool measures the quality of youths' experiences, aspects of the learning environment and staff practices. The YPQI consists of a three step process: 1) Assess – programs conduct a self-assessment of their program quality and participate in an external assessment of the program quality 2) Plan - Program staff use the scores on the YPQA to develop an improvement plan and; 3) Do – Program staff take the actions necessary to complete the improvement plan.

A recent study finds that programs that participated in the YPQI improved the overall quality of their program and these gains were consistent over time. Based on the study results effective implementation of the intervention requires about 30 hours a week shared between a 4 staff member team (site coordinator and 3 program leaders) over an 18-month period.

The YPQI process and supporting research: www.cypq.org/content/youth-program-quality-intervention-ypqi-research-study-implications-policy-and-practice



Mindful Schools

According to Mindful Schools, “mindfulness is focusing on particular aspects of your experiences; be it thoughts, senses, or emotions”.

Mindful Schools offers educators two training courses that will prepare them to implement mindfulness into their learning environments. Mindfulness Fundamentals is a 6-week, online course that teaches educators to practice mindfulness on their own. The next course, Curriculum Training, provides educators with the tools to use the mindfulness curriculum with youth. The course takes 12 hours to complete and can be taken in-person or online. The price of both courses is \$575. An educator with prior mindfulness training may opt out of Mindfulness Fundamentals saving \$125 on the price of training.

A randomized control study of the use of the Mindful Schools curriculum with Oakland elementary school students finds that youth improved their ability to pay attention, exercise self-control, participate in class, and empathize with others.

Website: www.mindfulschools.org

Supporting Research: www.mindfulschools.org/about-mindfulness/research/



Tribes Learning Communities

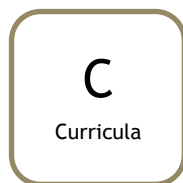
The Tribes approach to establishing a supportive learning environment includes four strategies: attentive listening, appreciation/no put downs, the right to pass – the right to participate, and mutual respect. Educators organize youth into small groups or tribes that will work together to tackle content or tasks while honoring the four agreements. Tribes is culturally and ethnically responsive and suggests adaptations so that educators can tailor the program to students' ethnic backgrounds, cultural beliefs, and language ability. The program is available in Spanish and English.

Optional training is available for educators. The training is a total of 24 hours across 4 days. Tribes offers a training sessions for each age group (elementary, middle, and high school) and a session for youth development programs who are interested in using the approach. In the youth development training, educators will receive a guidebook and materials needed to implement Tribes. Price listed (\$225 per participant) is for the youth development specific course and account for the 20 person required minimum for each training. The per person rate lowers based on the number of participants and can be as low as \$175 per person. Educators may also choose to participate in 10 week online training. Tribes offers tools to monitor implementation and also to assess changes in student behavior.

Quasi-experimental research on the Tribes Learning community indicate that youth in grades K – 8 improved their academic behaviors and academic performance.

Website: <http://tribes.com>

Tier 2 Strategies for Addressing Non-Cognitive Factors



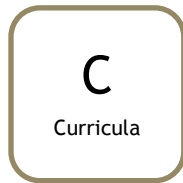
4Rs (Reading, Writing, Respect, and Resolution)

The 4Rs curriculum is a 35-week sequenced curriculum that uses read-alouds, book talks, and lessons to develop youths' social and emotional skills. The curriculum covers topics such as managing emotions, conflict resolution, and being assertive. "Family Connection" activities ask youth to complete tasks with their families as a way to extend the curriculum to students' home. Educators can use the curriculum with youth in PreK – 8th using the grade specific activities and lessons. The 4Rs curriculum is divided into seven units that can be implemented in an academic year if one lesson is covered once a week.

The Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, the developers of the curriculum, offers training and coaching. There are also tools that educators can use to monitoring implementation of the 4Rs curriculum and to assess changes in student behavior.

A 3-year randomized control study of the effectiveness of the 4Rs program in New York public schools found that students exhibited improved academic performance, positive social skills, and a decline in behavioral problems.

Website: www.morningsidecenter.org/node/36/



The Social Decision Making/Problem Solving Program

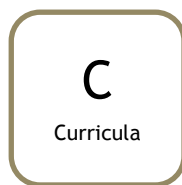
This is a developmentally paced curricula that teaches youth in grades K – 8 about self-control, social awareness and decision-making skills.

The curriculum consists of 30 lessons that can be implemented over the course of an academic year and take home activities for families to learn about social and emotional development.

There are multiple training options available to educators including a 2-3 day training on the curriculum, a half day or full day training for administrators that focuses on institutionalizing the curriculum, and a tailored program consultation. Detailed information about training is not available on the website. Educators will need to call the developers to discuss training options. The curriculum also features tools for assessing program implementation and student behavioral changes.

The quasi-experimental research on the Social Decision Making/Problem Solving programs showed promising results. Participating youth improved their positive social behaviors, exhibited fewer behavioral problems and reduced their emotional distress. Youth also improved their academic performance.

Website: www.ubhcisweb.org/sdm/index.htm



PATHS

The PATHS curriculum targets five domains of social emotional learning for elementary school children. These domains include self-control, emotional understanding, positive self-esteem, relationships and interpersonal problem-solving skills. The PATHS curriculum is sensitive to the development of youth and includes a specific curriculum for each grade level. A unique supplement to the curriculum is a package of activities that parents can do with their children at home.

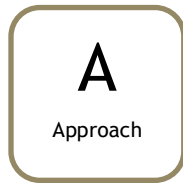
A 2-day training on the PATHS curriculum is available. Programs also have the option to send staff to a train-the-trainer course. The PATHS curriculum offers an evaluation kit that guides educators through the process of evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of the curriculum.

The effectiveness of the PATHS curriculum is documented in several randomized control studies that find that young participants experience improved social competence, stronger ability to recognize and understand emotions, and less aggressive problem solving. Multiple high profile agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Education and the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) have endorsed the PATHS curriculum. Another noteworthy feature is that the curriculum is aligned with the Common Core Standards. The developers of PATHS recommend training but it is not required to implement the curriculum.

Website: <http://www.channing-bete.com/prevention-programs/paths/paths.html>

Key Research Findings on PATHS: <http://www.pathstraining.com/main/research/>

PATHS alignment with the Common Core Standards: <http://www.channing-bete.com/prevention-programs/paths/correlations.html>



Design Thinking

Educators can use Design Thinking to shape how young people approach problem solving. Teachers at Ormondale Elementary school in California, developed the five phase Design Thinking process as an approach to learning that moves away from students receiving information to welcoming students as partners in their own learning. The five phases of Design Thinking include: 1) Discovery 2) Interpretation 3) Ideation 4) Experimentation and; 5) Evolution. Design Thinking emphasizes that learning is an iterative process, where “failure” can be expected and seen as another opportunity to grow.

Educators can download the Design Thinking Toolkit for free on the website. The toolkit includes a step-by-step guide to getting started, an in-depth review of each of the five phases, and examples of planning documents to support educators use Design Thinking. There are no strict guidelines for how long the process should take to implement. The duration and frequency estimate reflect the timing in the research on Design Thinking.

The available research on Design Thinking is qualitative and focuses on its implementation in K-12 classrooms. The study does not address specific youth outcomes but demonstrates that youth had opportunities to practice working collaboratively, incorporate their own ideas, and evaluate their work. There was also evidence that youth understood the Design Thinking process. However, educators found it challenging to make the link between the Design Thinking process and specific content clear to youth.

Website: <http://designthinkingforeducators.com/>



RULER Approach

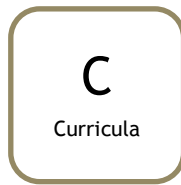
The acronym RULER stands for Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating emotions. The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence designed the RULER approach to be implemented in 3 phases. First, educators are trained on the “Anchors of Emotional Intelligence”, tools that are used to develop emotional intelligence. The Anchor Tools are introduced to youth through 16 daily lessons. In the second phase, educators implement the Feeling Words curriculum, which features 75 hands-on lessons for grades K – 8. The curriculum teaches youth how to express their emotions. Educators can vary the delivery of the lessons to meet their scheduling needs but should be able to complete the curriculum in one academic year. The third phase, is about sustainability. Educators can receive ongoing, online support from Yale and can also seek guidance from their colleagues who were trained on the Anchors of Emotional Intelligence.

The RULER Approach requires a minimum of 7 days of training. Four days of training are used to introduce educators to the Anchors of Emotional Intelligence. The remaining 3 days of training are dedicated to learning how to deliver the Feeling Words curriculum. Training and curriculum will cost \$3,300 per educator. Ongoing support is offered through an online community and RULER Coaches. Prices will vary for ongoing support depending on the level of technical assistance needed. The RULER approach also offers educators tools to monitor implementation and assess student behavior.

Quasi-experimental research on the RULER approach finds that participating 5th and 6th graders improved their academic performance and social behavior. Also, improvements in the school climate were associated with the use of the RULER approach.

Website: <http://ei.yale.edu/ruler/>

Tier 3 Strategies for Addressing Non-Cognitive Factors



Mindfulness in Afterschool

The Mindfulness in Afterschool curriculum is a set of 16 lessons that provide youth opportunities to learn about and practice mindfulness. The curriculum covers topics such as habits, empathy, and mindful test taking. As part of the curriculum youth are encouraged to keep a journal and to practice what they learned in the mindfulness session during the week. The curriculum is designed for youth in grades K- 5 but can be adapted for use with older adults.

There are two different implementation options. Programs can choose to have a mindfulness facilitator come to the school to deliver the curriculum or program staff can participate in a 2 day workshop to learn how to implement the curriculum. The cost listed is to train program staff to deliver the curriculum. The cost includes 36 hours of training for up to 40 participants, the curriculum, supplemental mindfulness exercises, and 2 hours of onsite coaching for program staff. Programs can consider sharing the cost of implementation with another program if their site has fewer than 40 staff members.

An evaluation of the Mindfulness in Afterschool curriculum finds that youth behavior improved and students reported that the program helped them make decisions, focus better in class, and avoid fights and arguments. The youth surveys used in the evaluation present an option for assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum.

The Mindfulness in Afterschool curriculum does not currently have a website but interested programs can contact Sam Piha, founder and principal of Temescal Associates, for more information.

For more information contact: spiha@temescalassociates.com

C

Curricula

S.O.A.R Study Skills

The acronym S.O.A.R. stand for Sets goals, Organize, Ask Questions, and Record. The S.O.A.R curriculum is a series of 10 – 20 minute lessons that teach youth specific study skills using a four-step model. First the students identify the problem, then they learn a solution, that is followed by an activity that helps youth apply the solution to their lives. Finally, youth reflect on the effectiveness of the solution and modifications are made as necessary. The curriculum is sequential so that each lesson builds off the next. Time management, organizing papers, taking notes and setting goals are examples of topics covered in the curriculum.

A multi-media teachers guide comes with the curriculum and includes ready-to-go lessons, visual presentations, student assessments, and links to additional resources. The developers encourage educators to use the curriculum as often as they feel is appropriate for their youth. To implement the curriculum educators will need to provide youth with a planner, 1.5-inch binder, poly binder folders, notebook paper and a file box. Educators also have the option of purchasing the SOAR Study Skills book, which can range from \$15 - \$30 per student depending on the quantity purchased. Case studies of three high schools and one middle school report that the program has been effective for their students.

Website: <http://studyskills.com/>

C

Curricula

Step-it-up-2-Thrive

The Step-it-up-2 Thrive is a 4-part curriculum that supports youths' effort to achieve their personal goals by teaching self-reflection techniques, communication skills, a balanced view of development, and life skills. The curriculum has a strong research base and draws from the literature in psychology and positive youth development. The four core areas of the curriculum, sparks, mindset, thriving and goal management, are named to reflect the body of research that supports it. There are 27 lessons spread across each of the four areas. The curriculum is suitable for youth in 5th – 12th grade.

Educators can download the curriculum for free on the Step-it-up-2-Thrive website along with tip sheets and a series of briefs that provide information about each of the four core curriculum areas.

The Step-it-up-2-Thrive curriculum was evaluated as part of a summer school intervention for high school students. The curriculum was used in students' math and English classes. The evaluation does not find any changes in students' behaviors associated with the four core areas of the curriculum. However, students show improvements in math and English performance and higher school attendance. Students also reported feeling more confident about their note taking skills and leadership ability.

Website: <http://www.stepitup2thrive.org/>

SGSelf-Guided
Activity

Self Authoring

The Self Authoring program is a series of 4 structured writing exercises. The writing exercises take authors through an autobiography, an exploration of their virtues and faults and defining their future goals.

Authors can choose to complete all 4 of the writing exercises or only the one(s) they find most suitable. The complete package of 4 exercises cost \$30 while an individual section costs \$15. The developers recommend that if authors intend to complete all 4 of the writing exercises that they do so over several days. During a research study on the Self-Authoring program, college-age participants completed the 4 exercises in 2.5 hours.

Randomized control studies on the effectiveness of the Self-Authoring program find that college student authors (18 – 23 years) raised their GPAs by 30% and were less likely to drop out of courses. The developers are working on creating a high school version of the self-authoring program.

Website: <http://www.selfauthoring.com/index.shtml>

Supporting Research: <http://www.selfauthoring.com/JAPcomplete.pdf>

A

Approach

Building Intentional Communities (BIC) Initiative

Be the Change Consulting (BCC) created the BIC Initiative to influence character development beliefs and practices at the staff, program and youth levels. The cornerstone of the BIC initiative is the youth curriculum but it is accompanied by professional development for facilitators and supervisors. Programs can choose between two levels of implementation. Programs that choose to be “Enrichment Sites” will receive the BIC curriculum, the school/program wide curriculum, and monthly facilitator trainings. In addition to receiving the same supports as “Enrichment sites”, the “Intensive Sites” will receive observations of program activities, coaching for supervisors and facilitators, and a 4-series workshop on changing program culture and climate. The cost listed is applicable for programs interested in becoming “Enrichment Sites” and should be considered a baseline price for programs interested in becoming “Intensive Sites.”

BCC recommends that programs implement the youth curriculum 2 – 3 times a week. Additional school/program wide activities can be implemented 3 – 4 times a year. Training frequency for facilitators and supervisors varies depending on the level of engagement (Enrichment or Intensive) and ranges from monthly to six times a year. Be the Change Consulting uses a Site Level Capacity Assessment Tool with interested programs to assess the program’s capacity to implement the BIC curriculum.

External evaluations of the BIC Initiative by Public Profit find that programs improve quality indicators of climate and aspects of staff facilitation. At the youth level, surveys showed that youth participants felt more positively about school, sharing their emotions, and their ability. Youth at participant sites also had lower school suspension rates than youth at non-participating programs. In general, evaluation findings indicate that program sites with deeper involvement in the BIC curriculum also saw more positive changes.

Website: <http://www.bethechangeconsulting.com/>



G.R.I.T Initiative

College Track developed the Guts, Resilience, Integrity and Tenacity (G.R.I.T) Initiative to help articulate the youth outcomes that align with the mission of their program but were left out of academic assessments.

The foundation of the G.R.I.T. Initiative is a rubric that details specific academic and leadership behaviors for each characteristic at three different levels: 1) approaching expectations 2) meets expectations and; 3) exceeds expectations. For example, the Guts section of the rubric describes the academic and leadership behaviors for each level of expectation. College Track gave their sites flexibility in the way that the rubric is used to promote G.R.I.T. in youth.

College Track also developed a 4-week curriculum that is designed to give youth clear examples of the four focal characteristics. The curriculum provides youth an opportunity to discuss what the characteristic means, people in their lives who possess the characteristic, assess whether they have the characteristic, and how that characteristic can be helpful in their lives.

The G.R.I.T. curriculum can be used at minimal costs. Programs should plan to provide instructors for the curriculum, access to an Internet connection, a projector or computer to screen videos, and basic office supplies. College Track recommends programs dedicate a few hours to developing an implementation plan.

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[measure and manage
what matters.]